

**THEOCRITUS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649256778

Theocritus by C. S. Calverley

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**C. S. CALVERLEY**

# **THEOCRITUS**



THEOCRITUS.

G  
3865  
E.C.

# THEOCRITUS

*TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE.*

BY

C. S. CALVERLEY,

*LATE FELLOW OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.*

AUTHOR OF "VERSES AND TRANSLATIONS," ETC.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED.

LONDON: GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET,  
COVENT GARDEN.

1883.

278852  
18. 10. 32

PA  
4443  
E5C3  
1883

CHISWICK PRESS:—C. WHITTINGHAM AND CO., TOOKS COURT,  
CHANCERY LANE.

## PREFACE.

I HAD intended translating all or nearly all these Idylls into blank verse, as the natural equivalent of Greek or of Latin hexameters; only deviating into rhyme where occasion seemed to demand it. But I found that other metres had their special advantages: the fourteen-syllable line in particular has that, among others, of containing about the same number of syllables as an ordinary line of Theocritus. And there is also no doubt something gained by variety.

Several recent writers on the subject have laid down that every translation of Greek poetry, especially bucolic poetry, must be in rhyme of some sort. But they have seldom stated, and it is hard to see, why. There is no rhyme in the original, and *primâ facie* should be none in the translation. Professor Blackie has, it is



true, pointed out the "assonances, alliterations, and rhymes," which are found in more or less abundance in Ionic Greek.\* These may of course be purely accidental, like the hexameters in Livy or the blank-verse lines in Mr. Dickens's prose: but accidental or not (it may be said) they are there, and ought to be recognised. May we not then recognise them by introducing similar assonances, etc. here and there into the English version? or by availing ourselves of what Professor Blackie again calls attention to, the "compensating powers" † of English? I think with him that it was hard to speak of our language as one which "transforms *βοὸς μεγαλοῖο βοείην* into 'great ox's hide.'" Such phrases as 'The Lord is a man of war,' 'The trumpet spake not to the armed throng,' are to my ear quite as grand as Homer: and it would be equally fair to ask what we are to make of a language which transforms Milton's line into *ἡ σάλπιγξ οὐ προσέφη τὸν ὀπλισμένον ὄχλον.* ‡ But be this as it may, these phenomena are surely too

\* BLACKIE'S *Homer*, Vol. I., pp. 413, 414.

† *Ibid.*, page 377, etc.

‡ Professor Kingsley.

rare and too arbitrary to be adequately represented by any regularly recurring rhyme: and the question remains, what is there in the unrhymed original to which rhyme answers?

To me its effect is to divide the verse into couplets, triplets, or (if the word may include them all) *stanzas* of some kind. Without rhyme we have no apparent means of conveying the effect of stanzas. There are of course devices such as repeating a line or part of a line at stated intervals, as is done in 'Tears, idle tears' and elsewhere: but clearly none of these would be available to a translator. Where therefore he has to express stanzas, it is easy to see that rhyme may be admissible and even necessary. Pope's couplet may (or may not) stand for elegiacs, and the *In Memoriam* stanza for some one of Horace's metres. Where the heroes of Virgil's Eclogues sing alternately four lines each, Gray's quatrain seems to suggest itself: and where a similar case occurs in these Idylls (as for instance in the ninth) I thought it might be met by taking whatever received English stanza was nearest the required length. Pope's couplet again may possibly best convey the pomposity of some Idylls and the

point of others. And there may be divers considerations of this kind. But, speaking generally, where the translator has not to intimate stanzas—where he has on the contrary to intimate that there are none—rhyme seems at first sight an intrusion and a *suggestio falsi*.

No doubt (as has been observed) what 'Pastorals' we have are mostly written in what is called the heroic measure. But the reason is, I suppose, not far to seek. Dryden and Pope wrote 'heroics,' not from any sense of their fitness for bucolic poetry, but from a sense of their universal fitness: and their followers copied them. But probably no scholar would affirm that any poem, original or translated, by Pope or Dryden or any of their school, really resembles in any degree the bucolic poetry of the Greeks. Mr. Morris, whose poems appear to me to resemble it more almost than anything I have ever seen, of course writes what is technically Pope's metre, and equally of course is not of Pope's school. Whether or no Pope and Dryden *intended* to resemble the old bucolic poets in style is, to say the least, immaterial. If they did not, there is no reason whatever why any of us